

Sent on Sept. 11, 2009

Dear SAG Regional Branch Member:

We realize you have been inundated with campaign email messages. There is much information to share yet limited ways to share it. But the 2009 national election is more than just another election. This is about the future of our union. Please consider the following:

-MembershipFirst does not support a wholesale merger with AFTRA. A merger will not provide SAG with added leverage for the next round of TV/Theatrical negotiations. Most importantly, any attempt to combine our unions will not be achieved by Oct. 1, 2010, the mandatory start date for our 2011 TV/Theatrical negotiations.

-Until we can resolve the questions and concerns regarding the combining of SAG's Pension & Health Plan with AFTRA's Health & Retirement Plan, Ken Howard and Amy Aquino's rallying cry for "MERGER" is extremely pre-mature. The following are a few examples of the differences in our respective plans: Even with the new changes in SAG's P&H Plan, SAG's Plan is certainly different than AFTRA's. (Also take note that AFTRA lowered its Plans rates well before SAG. Is MembershipFirst responsible for that TOO?)

-SAG's pension accrual rate, as of January 2010, will be 2% of earnings with an annual cap of \$225,000 per EMPLOYER. AFTRA's pension accrual rate is around 1% of earnings with an annual earnings cap of \$200,000 per YEAR..

-SAG's new Plan I quarterly health premium will be \$249 for the member and covering all immediate family members. AFTRA's premiums start at \$330 per quarter for the individual member ONLY and up to \$633 per quarter for a family of four.

-SAG's early retirement penalty is 3% per year. AFTRA's early retirement penalty is 6% per year.

If there were to be a blending of our respective plans, there would have to be an averaging out of SAG's terms with AFTRA's terms, potentially resulting in diminished benefits for SAG participants.

SAG's Pension & Health Plans Take 2 2009 Summer edition reported painful financial and benefit changes in order to adjust to the many challenges facing the Screen Actors Guild plans. As with almost every institution in this country, including AFTRA, our pension and health plans took tremendous hits based on the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. A loss of almost \$800 MILLION DOLLARS from investments, record breaking unemployment, the 100 day Writers Strike, the severe decline in movie production based on dwindling financing, the continued surge in reality programming and the loss of pilots to AFTRA has caused our trustees to readjust and re-evaluated.

U4S's presidential candidate Ken Howard has implied that Presidential candidate Anne-Marie Johnson, Secretary-Treasurer Connie Stevens and Membershipfirst board members are partially responsible for the critical changes in our plans due to our stance during the 2008 TV/Theatrical Negotiations. We see it differently. We fought hard to protect what we had and to secure revenue in areas that could generate millions for our employers. Sadly, there will be little to no contributions made to SAG's

P&H plans generated from these revenue streams.

Although THEY are placing blame, the 2009 “smart deal” Ken Howard and Amy Aquino help deliver to our membership will also have a negative impact on SAG’s P&H plans:

- Loss of P&H contributions due to FREE 17/24 day exhibition windows from move-over of traditional broadcast programs to the Internet/New Media.
- Loss of P&H contributions from Original Product Made For New Media with budgets \$15K per minute or less. (NON UNION WORK)
- Loss of P&H contributions due to ZERO residuals from Original Product Made For New Media with budgets \$25K per minute or less.
- Loss of P&H contributions due to ZERO residuals for pre-1971 movies and pre-1974 television shows rerun on the Internet/New Media. And so on.

Until we have successfully formed one union representing all actor-performers and all scripted dramatic/comedic programming, SAG must protect its’ jurisdiction. And unless all other AFTRA contracts, including the Net Code (i.e. Soap Operas) and all contracts covering broadcasters, disc jockys and recording artists, expire on June 30th 2011, along with our TV/Theatrical contract, those members will be obligated to continue working due to the No Strike Clause. They have DIFFERENT contracts.

Real leverage is SAG and AFTRA adhering to Phase I, jointly negotiating the 2011 TV/Theatrical Contract: speaking in one voice to protect and build on what so many have fought and sacrificed for. MembershipFirst believes this can happen. We believe MEMBERS want this to happen.

This is a defining moment for SAG members. With this election we will determine the direction and the future of our union. As National Board Candidate Martin Sheen said, “We can choose the path of least resistance with management compliance or we can choose MembershipFirst and reunite with the spirit of those brave SAG founders and fight to regain and protect the wages, residuals and working conditions for which they fought so long and hard and gave so much to secure.”

MembershipFirst is against any form of Qualified Voting. MembershipFirst has a plan regarding uniting all actors-performers under the representation of ONE union. Please go to membershipfirst.com to read and view our plans for the future.

Secretary-Treasurer Connie Stevens and Presidential candidate Anne-Marie Johnson would appreciate your support. Please vote!

For our Hawaii Regional Branch members, please view the true SAG Aloha Spirit, at membershipfirst.com.

Thank you.
MembershipFirst
